

***Exploration of Public Interest Design Process in Small Design-Build***

**An Honors Thesis (HONR 499)**

**by**

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## Abstract

In the past several years, a movement of public interest design, also known as community based or participatory design, has entered the main consciousness of architectural design. This design philosophy focuses on the user, holding in high importance the idea that we as designers are designing for the benefit of the user. Through involving the client and potential users within the design process, designers can get a greater understanding of their important issues and concerns, allowing the users to fully utilize their built environment.

This project looks the ideas and processes of public interest design at different scales, from one-to-one interactions to community engaged charrettes, in exploring the relation between the designer and client(s) through continuous dialogue. This project chronicles these meetings, charrettes, and activities in the development of the new Motivate Our Minds Community Garden and small design build projects with the students to decorate the small existing gardens and main garden.

## Acknowledgements

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I would also like to thank Motivate Our Minds, especially Holly Ford, Marchal Armstead, Monique Armstrong, and the group of fifth through eighth grade students who participated in We Think It, We Make It during the Spring 2018 semester.

Special thanks go out to the Whitely Community Council, Shaffer Chapel, the Whitely Community, and the Motivate Our Minds families who participated throughout the charrettes and supported the project and Motivate Our Minds in this exploration.

Finally, I would like to thank Ball State's Honors College, the College of Architecture and Planning, and the Academic Excellence Grant for allowing this project to be possible.

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## An Introduction into Public Interest Design

As an architectural movement, the contemporary field of Public Interest Design looks at a different approach to the design process. Being a relatively new field to the architectural discourse, the movement is known by many names and reflect many meanings of architectural design. For example, the field of Public Interest Design can be referred to as Community-Based design, participatory design, and social architecture, just to name a few. As for the movement's design philosophy, Public Interest Design refers to a design process where more emphasis is placed on the users rather than the building. Architecture professor Nadia Anderson write that, "Public interest design builds on long-standing design practices including integrative layering and experimentalism, but shifts the emphasis from products such as individual buildings and spaces to engaged processes" (Anderson). Another professor and researcher, Henry Sanoff, states that, "Community design, or social architecture, is an attitude about a force for change in the creation and management of environments for people. Its strength lies in being a movement that cuts across the traditional professional boundaries. The activity of community design is based on the principle that the environment works better if the people affected by its changes are actively involved in its creation and management instead of being treated as passive consumers." (Sanoff). This reflects a shift in the fundamentals and understanding of design, moving from a project-based approach to a more process driven approach. Many practitioners and important figures in this movement fall along the ideas that, "Addressing public needs is the motivation of public interest design, or in other words the 'why'..." and "Serving the under served" area what this design philosophy is (Feldman, Palleroni, Perkes, and Bell). Overall this design philosophy aims to explore ways to design for the human experience by developing experience, relationships, and understanding with who we are designing for, what do the users deal with in the built environment, and how they engage with design. Comparing it to past movements, Public Interest Design does not follow "function follow form" or "form follows function" but rather form and function follows understanding, or in other words form is derived from the user and not as much from use. It reflects a shift in how architects view the design process and how they understand their and the user experiences in the built environment.

Think of the architectural movement of Public Interest Design as a reaction against the uniformity of Modernism and the iconography of Post-Modernism. Anderson's research also reflected this reaction against Modernist and Post-Modernist design, stating that, "However, modernism's emphasis on universality ultimately undermines its social agenda. Universal solutions to social problems, such as high-rise, high-density housing blocks, removed the social and spatial complexities of inner-city neighborhoods without regard for specifics of place, culture, and individuality." and that, "Postmodernism relied heavily, however, on form and image to express identity, leading to emphasis on appearance of the design at the expense of its social role. Some participatory practices also downplayed the role of design, positioning designers as uncritical advocates for local agendas" (Anderson). Public Interest Design aims to design through the user experience, in how the project can best suit the surrounding environment to increase comfort, in how the space reflects its cultural and social heritage, in how different groups of users inhabit and view the space differently based on their experiences.

So why is there a level of confusion regarding the ideas behind Public Interest Design? To those outside of the architecture field, it would seem that architecture design innately stands to benefit and design for humans, however, this may not always be the case. Architects traditionally need to deal with a complex set of factors when it comes to design, including but not limited to resources, climate, money, clients, materials, experience, lighting, influence, codes, and safety, just to name a few. The notion of



designing for the benefit of the users within the space can sometime fall from high consideration depending on the rest of the factors that an designer must juggle. In addition, designers and users need to realize and understand that architects do not have all the answers. We many not know or can predict how a user or a group of users behave and interact in a space. Designing may influence a user to act a certain way, but it does not mandate that action. Without input from clients or users, architects may fail to understand what is important and benefited to the users and can end up designing poor spaces.

With this shift in approach, there is a shift in both the architect's role within the design process. As part of their report, Bell remarks that, "Public interest practitioners are pragmatists, creatively using and devising strategies to solve problems that often push the boundaries of conventional practice" (Feldman, Palleroni, Perkes, and Bell). In this, the architect actively engages the design process to better benefit the user experience through continual exploration of design solutions. Designer Liz Ogbu talked about the roles or "hats" that the architect wears while designing and engaging "Opportunities for Impact" :

- Expert Citizen
  - "an individual trained (or with experience) in a specific discipline"
  - An architect brings their design experience and knowledge to a project
- Storyteller
  - Telling the stories of the users
  - Showing the permanence of their site and that could help actually bring dignity to them
  - Catalyst of conversation
- Translator
  - "Taking the things I hear when I listen at the table and the stories that I know that I need to tell to create impact and combining them into something that is tangible reflection of all of that and that allows" (Ogbu).

By juggling these roles, the architect takes their expertise and engages the users, their communities, and the architectural field in order to expand the design, benefit the users, and draw more attention to create a continual conversation so that more design can be explored for the benefit of the communities.

What truly changes Public Interest Design is its continual relation and communication with community engagement and the expansion of the client's or user's role within the design process. Bell writes, "Community collaboration is facilitated by the continuity of relationships over time, building trust and mutual understanding between practitioners and community members. Community participation has been shown to improve the project outcomes and a project's financial viability. And importantly, participation can support community empowerment; that is, the ability of the community to act of its own behalf in present and future projects" (Feldman, Palleroni, Perkes, and Bell). Ogbu describes these collaborators as "Citizen Expert" or "an individual armed with the experience of living or working in a specific community" (Ogbu). These collaborators bring their own knowledge about how they engage with design, their community, and their work to the table and through enriching these relationships designers can learn how to create spaces that are better suited to their clients and users. In her TED Talk, Ogbu states that, "...they know about their needs and aspirations, their successes and their failures, and what I need to do as the expert citizen is create space at the table for them to be able to come and share that knowledge because oftentimes they have not been empowered to see that knowledge as expertise..." (Ogbu). It is important to listen to the users, for it is for them that we are

designing for. Through learning from their stories and experiences we can create better and more beneficial designs, empowering them to utilize their environments to a higher level.

Why is this important? The interaction between the architect and users can open up new doors to design in how we design, what is important within a design, and how do we keep the users engaged. It dependent upon the relationships that are forged with the designer and the community so that designs can be explored, facilitated, and modified. "While the designer brings professional knowledge and tools to the relationship, local partners bring critical knowledge about local culture, practices, and values. The designer sees situations with new eyes, bringing alternatives to conditions local partners may view as impenetrable. Local partners understand how the material components of a place, such as houses and trees, represent broader nonmaterial values, such as stability and friendliness. They know the history of their place and how they interact with it daily" (Anderson). This relationship between the architect and users affects and increases the understanding between the two, allowing for effective communication of ideas to benefit the overall design. The process of Public Interest Design explores this relationship in order to find the "why" and design for the users rather than the project.



## Process Analysis

For my honor's thesis, I wanted to explore the relationship between the designer and client through a design build project for and with a community partner. For this, my thesis advisor, Pam Harwood, was approached by Motivate Our Minds (MOMs) to facilitate two projects; helping them engage and develop a plan for their new community gardens and facilitating a club for MOMs middle school students to learn through making. As I jumped on this opportunity, my thesis evolved from a single design-build project with one client to several smaller design-build projects created in collaboration with students and a larger community dialogue about the gardens. With this shift, I feel that the project allowed me to explore the ideas and processes of Public Interest Design first hand. For my creative thesis project, I looked at the development of the MOMs Community Gardens through a series of one-on-one meetings with the MOMs leadership and charettes with the Whitely Community. Through these meetings, I was able to get an understanding about how MOMs works and what programs and ideas they held in importance when engaging their students and their community.

The development of the community garden plan can be looked at through the process of Public Interest Design. First, we have the dialogue established through the main client, the leadership and faculty at Motivate Our Minds. Though they were the one who came to us about this project and set criteria for what they wanted the gardens to accomplish, they continuously provided input about what they found helpful or harmful in the past with their experience. The meetings created a dialogue with the users so that we as designers can approach them with questions about how they engaged the built environment and so that they as the users can engage us with what they find important about design. It also created a understanding about this shift in the design process, allowing for more collaboration within the design. This process looked to learn the stories of the users, what they wanted, what they were concerned about, and what they are interested in for the design, while empowering the participant to input their own ideas with the help of their peers. The charrette created interest in the project, drawing around 12-16 participants for each session and striking the interest of the community through the engagement with the Whitely Community Council. This process started to look at how to benefit the design of the gardens through cultivating knowledge and experience of the collective citizen experts and expert citizens.

The parallel project of *We Think It / We Make It* took a different approach to the Public Interest Design process. Each month was a new exercise in how we as designers can engage clients and users, as well as exploring how we as mentors can help cultivate the minds of new designers as they learn the tools and skills. Each project focused on what the students wanted to design and how we can help them achieve it. It was a different type of conversation that we had with the students when compared to the community, but it still reflected the ideas of Public Interest Design since it created an open dialogue with the students, looking at their experience and pushing them to collaborate in their designs. It also opened collaboration with the students about the design of the gardens and what they want so to see as the main users of the gardens. These sessions with the club increased the student's engagement and understanding with the design process, pushing them to think creatively in producing their ideas and exploring solutions.

As a student and as an architectural designer, I had to engage these projects from several lenses, much like the hats that were discussed by Liz Ogbu in her TED Talk. As an expert citizen, I was able to bring my architectural education to the table, whether that being through design experience,



software skills, crafting abilities, or even image creation. As a student and not as a member of the MOMs community, I did not understand all of the activities and issues that MOMs and the Whitely Community experience on a daily basis, what they want in their gardens, what they find important, and even what they worry about. By engaging with the clients and users through our one-on-one meetings and charettes, I was able to gather ideas brought forward by users to begin to become the translator of ideas with the development of the overall plan. Now, as the storyteller, I am able to relay these idea to the community through a collection of thoughts and images, hopefully increasing knowledge and excitement for the project.

For analyzing and translating the ideas from the charettes, I took two approaches. The first approach was to compile all of the ideas into a table and look at the patterns of ideas from a numerical statistic. What I found was that the groups of a single charrette may reflect each other, but may not reflect the same ideas from another community charrette. It was also evident that even though all groups knew that we are planning a community garden for the site, not all of the groups specified layouts for garden plots. Depending on the experiences of each group, of even a specific community member within a group, the present plan would go more or less indepth with detail, showcasing even the layout of specific plants. Another set of ideas set forth was the abundance of different gardens. Typically only being discussed by a group or two's plans, there are around ten types of gardens that are proposed. Going farther, more research must be explored about each type of garden, if some of these gardens can be combined, and if these gardens will benefit the users within the site or benefit the ideas set forth by Motivate Our Minds. The second approach I took was visually overlaying a simple diagram over each presented plan and marking it up with a set color scheme. By taking the created diagrams, I was able to develop a compiled diagram with all of the proposed schemes, which allowed me to look for patterns in layout and ordering. Using these diagrams and diagram scheme, I was able to develop a simplified plan for the garden, looking at the presented ideas and similarities to find which ideas are important to the benefit of the community.

Through my thesis, I learned more about the Muncie community than the rest of my academic career. Though my discussions with MOMs, I learned about all of the resources and connections that Muncie community groups have to each other. Particularly at the first one-on-one meeting, everyone was listing off names of community members and neighborhood organizations to contact about collaboration. MOMs was also on top of these relations, quickly reaching out to organizations such as Shaffer Chapel, the Buley Center, and the Whitely Community Council about the charettes. We also got to open up dialogue with organizations such as Big Brothers, Big Sisters and Purdue Extension during the community charettes. However, it was also seen that there are several Muncie programs that we did not have as easy connection with or potentially we did not know of their existence. I also learned how to prepare and host community charettes, which is an important feature of public interest design. Finally, I believe that I have expanded my understanding of what is Public Interest Design and increased my skill set in how I communicate these ideas and the ideas brought forth by the community so that designers can get a better understanding to design spaces.

For this project, there were some struggles in engaging and completing this project. Time was a big factor. Since I worked with a community organization and help set up community charettes to engage the community, I had to keep in mind everyone's potential schedules and my own, trying to create time to continue the dialogue of design. It was particularly hard at the end of the semester due to all of the end of the year projects that had to be completed to keep communication running. As a



designer, I had to deal with letting go of control of the project. From my course work, several of my projects were individual works where I had total control over the design. For this project, since it heavily relied on the collaborative input of others, I had to step back and evaluate why each idea should be in the project and to what it benefits. It is not always what I think would be best for the space, it is what the users know from their experience to be the best or at least important to be explored in order to benefit the project.

This may be the end of my thesis and this semester's exploration into Public Interest Design, but this is not the end of the Motivate Our Minds project. The results from the charrettes and the beginning of the proposed plan was presented at the MOMs annual banquet on May 16 where it was used to show the story of the gardens, the ideas present by the community, and a starting point for future development. Throughout the next few years, this project will continue and hopefully be realized into the garden that benefits Motivate Our Minds and the surrounding Whitely Community. It will take continuous support and communications from all parties participating in the design for it to evolve to spaces where it will truly benefit the community and students.

There are steps that can be taken in the next few months to continue the development of the gardens. First, there needs to be a collaboration between the Architecture and Landscape Architecture departments within CAP specifically for the community gardens project to get the expertise of landscape architecture students and faculty, since they may have more experience with designing these proposed spaces. Next is establishing a one-on-one dialogue with the MOMs faculty, particularly the ones in charge of the gardens and Garden Club. During the community charrettes, these faculty members went the most in depth with the needed infrastructure for the gardens and the specific placement of garden beds, flowers, trees, and crops. They are the ones who know the gardens the most and will be the instructors for the students when they engage the site, so it is crucial that they are engaged with during the design process. Establishing relationships started during the one-on-one meetings with exterior community groups would be helpful during this time as well so that MOMs can cultivate programs that will benefit the community and increase excitement and involvement within the project. Finally, it may be helpful to engage the MOMs summer programs, exploring what they were in the past with the old gardens, what they are currently, and determining what is missing or necessary to have in the new garden site. Having first-hand experience as a design can better help communicate ideas to the users, clients, and other designers about what needs to be there.

This creative project allowed me to explore the ideas of public interest design first-hand. It takes a lot of collaboration from both the designers and from the client in order for it to succeed, however there are several routes to approaching this design philosophy. It is constantly changing and evolving. This project in itself has grown and changed since the original proposal. I believe these changes benefit the MOMs community as they expand their programming, and for myself as this project has expanded my knowledge and skills. It was a privilege to work with the community of faculty and students at Motivate Our Minds this semester and I hope that through this project and hopefully future iterations of the project that their garden will come to fruition.

#### Appendix: Work Cited

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**AN HONORS THESIS (HONR 499)**

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## **ABSTRACT**

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# AN INTRODUCTION INTO PUBLIC INTEREST DESIGN

As an architectural movement, the contemporary field of Public Interest Design looks at a different approach to the design process. Being a relatively new field to the architectural discourse, the movement is known by many names and reflect many meanings of architectural design. For example, the field of Public Interest Design can be referred to as Community-Based design, participatory design, and social architecture, just to name a few. As for the movement's design philosophy, Public Interest Design refers to a design process where more emphasis is placed on the users rather than the building. Architecture professor Nadia Anderson write that, "Public interest design builds on long-standing design practices including integrative layering and experimentalism, but shifts the emphasis from products such as individual buildings and spaces to engaged processes" (Anderson). Another professor and researcher, Henry Sanoff, states that, "Community design, or social architecture, is an attitude about a force for change in the creation and management of environments for people. Its strength lies in being a movement that cuts across the traditional professional boundaries. The activity of community design is based on the principle that the environment works better if the people affected by its changes are actively involved in its creation and management instead of being treated as passive consumers." (Sanoff). This reflects a shift in the fundamentals and understanding of design, moving from a project-based approach to a more process driven approach. Many practitioners and important figures in this movement fall along the ideas that, "Addressing public needs is the motivation of public interest design, or in other words the 'why'." and "Serving the under served" area what this design philosophy is (Feldman, Palleroni, Perkes, and Bell). Overall this design philosophy aims to explore ways to design for the human experience by developing experience, relationships, and understanding with who we are designing for, what do the users deal with in the built environment, and how they engage with design. Comparing it to past movements, Public Interest Design does not follow "function follow form" or "form follows function" but rather form and function follows understanding, or in other words form is derived from the user and not as much from use. It reflects a shift in how architects view the design process and how they understand their and the user experiences in the built environment.

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## ***DESIGN FOR MOMS COMMUNITY GARDENS***

For the past year or so, Motivate Our Minds (MOMs) has been working without one key component of their programming: their main garden. Without this key element, their gardening and entrepreneurial programs have become smaller and limited due to the decrease of resources. By facilitating and exploring public interest design processes in the development of the new MOMs Community Gardens, we can start developing design ideas and strategies that will benefit the users and the community through the input of those who know the space and programs the best.

This project started the Spring 2018 semester and it is highly likely that iterations of this project will continue forward through the years as the gardens are developed, funded, and built. I worked on this project with my thesis advisor, Pam Harwood, as well as several other students, faculty, and community members which will be brought up throughout this project. Each person was influential in bringing in their personal perspectives and ideas in collaboration towards the community garden. These many voices truly allow for the garden to grow into spaces that will enrich the programs at MOMs and create spaces that will be benefited to all users.



# MOTIVATE OUR MINDS GARDEN HISTORY

The old Motivate Our Minds Garden is located on the corner of Lowell St. and N Burns St. in the Whitely neighborhood, and although it still stands today, Motivate Our Minds and neighborhood residents cannot access the site without permission from the property owner. When the garden started in 2004, it was placed on a neighbor's lot and supported several MOMs programs, ranging from their gardening and entrepreneurial clubs to the main component of their Summer programs. Since the passing of the neighbor, the site has been retracted and MOMs is no longer permitted to use the site as their gardens.

The gardens in particular were extremely popular to the students with several students remarking on the quality of the infamous MOMs strawberries that were grown. The garden was the main space for the gardening club, which allowed students to learn how to grow food and about healthy nutrition habits, as well as reinforcing and introducing key and new concepts. Produce produced here were also taken to be sold at Minnetrista by the students. The site was also utilized by the neighboring community and a nearby daycare, bringing life to the community. The structures found in the garden, particularly the Butterfly Pavilion and the composting toilet are previous CAP Design Build projects and the murals found along the site were created by a neighborhood artist. While the garden and garden beds cannot be moved, the remaining infrastructure such as the Butterfly Pavilion leave opportunities to be moved to and be used in the new site.

Photos provided by Motivate Our Minds















## THE NEW SITE

The new home of the Motivate Our Minds Garden is located on Highland Ave. and Brady St. MOMs owns the three highlighted lots. To the West is Shaffer Chapel and to the East is Union Missionary Baptist Church who also owns the Southeast lot adjacent to the site. The location on the site allows for opportunities to collaborate with the nearby churches, as well as the Buley Center's Boys and Girls Club.

For any proposed and built plans, all permanent structures currently need to be within the property lines of MOMs. Adjacent sites have the potential to be bought by MOM, currently only temporary structures can be placed there. The Northern part of the site is clear of trees, consists of a down slope to the East, and more naturally amenable to gardening. The Southern part of the site is more forested, allowing for natural shading and opportunities for more close spaces.





# WE THINK IT | WE MAKE IT

## A MOTIVATE OUR MINDS CLUB

The We Think It, We Make It club is a special club for the middle school students at Motivate Our Minds. With around ten to fourteen student participants, the club explored the ideas of design with the intention of learning through making. The club was ran by Pam Harwood and Janice Shimizu with help from the following undergraduate and graduate students from the College of Architecture and Planning: Anna Goodman, Desiree Green, Tyler Bracht, Mason Olson, Jen Pease, and myself. All MOMs students received written permission from their guardians and continuously had the choice to participate or not to participate in the session activities.

The goal for these sessions is to introduce and engage the MOMs students with the design process through a series of projects for their gardens. The first month was focused on individual or small partner projects to beautify the gardens. Students were given a choice between designing and building a bird house/feeder or a fairy garden for the courtyard or side garden. These projects were showcased at the March First Thursday event in MADJAX for the community to view. The second month explored a quick craft that the student can create for entrepreneurial practice. The students experimented with wind chimes and sun catchers to find a balance between aesthetic composition and musical chime with a selection of materials. These projects were later added to the current MOMs gardens alongside the bird houses and fairy gardens. The final month focused on tying up loose ends from the last two month and focusing on crafts and ideas for the proposed new garden. Two weeks were spent on looking at the new gardens with a site visit and a special charrette for the students. The final meeting took some of the ideas proposed in the charrettes and the students participated in a craft to leave their mark on the future gardens.

As the parallel project to this thesis and overall exploration of the project, I will be including pages about the project explorations that these students made. Later in this project and during the past semester the two projects begin to intertwine closer together. These students will be the main users of the Motivate Our Minds Community Gardens, so their participation, understanding, and involvement within the development of the gardens is important to the design of the site.







# ONE-ON-ONE CLIENT MEETING #1

*FEBRUARY 8, 2018*

*PARTICIPANTS: MONIQUE ARMSTRONG, HOLLY FORD, PAM HARWOOD, STEPHANIE VANCE*

This was the first of several meetings and correspondences in preparation and developing MOMs Community Garden. The main point of this meeting was to discuss the current situation of the project, the overall goal for the gardens, and the resources and people who could potentially help in the development of the site. Most of the time was spent discussing different community members that the clients and designers knew within the Muncie community who may be interested in the project. We also made plans to go out and get the needed information from community members and resources for our next meeting.

## *KEY IDEAS DISCUSSED*

- Sustainability as an organization
- How to engage kids and volunteers with the garden
- Need to find community members to pick up projects
- Consider people first
- Garden should create production and tranquility
- How to move the Butterfly Pavilion, composting toilet, and other infrastructure from the old garden
- History of the gardens and of the significant importance of Shaffer
- Potential collaboration with
  - Shaffer Chapel
  - Union Missionary Baptist Church
  - Buley Center/Boys and Girls Club
  - Big Brothers, Big Sisters
  - Muncie Arts & Culture Trail
  - Urban Garden Collation and Muncie Health
  - Whitely Community Council
  - Purdue Extension

## *QUESTIONS*

- What are the needs of the garden?
- Who are the stakeholders?
- Who are the users?
- What is the history of Motivate Our Minds
- Who does the garden serve?



## **ONE-ON-ONE CLIENT MEETING #2**

*FEBRUARY 15, 2018*

*PARTICIPANTS: HOLLY FORD, MARCHAL ARMSTEAD, PAM HARWOOD, STEPHANIE VANCE*

The second meeting focused on creating a database of potential community members who may be interested in the gardens based on past participation. We also talked about how to address the change in leadership as Ms. Armstrong was stepping down to pursue a new opportunity. Finally, we discussed and planned for the first community charette, finalizing a date and starting communication for the time and location. For the charette, we wanted the participants to divide up into groups and sign up to participate more in the development of the project during the event.

## **ONE-ON-ONE CLIENT MEETING #3**

*FEBRUARY 22, 2018*

*PARTICIPANTS: HOLLY FORD, PAM HARWOOD, STEPHANIE VANCE*

This meeting finalized the details of the first charette, what we wanted to present, and what we want the charette to accomplish. We also discussed what is needed physically for the participation of the community and set in motion to compile all the necessary material for the charette.

## ONE-ON-ONE MEETING REFLECTION

These initial meetings with the main coordinators of Motivate Our Minds was extremely eye opening. They had a trove of knowledge about the Whitely Community, Motivate Our Minds, and the city of Muncie where they can tell you who to talk to about a specific need for the project. These are the people who are entrusted with the care and development of several young students in the Muncie community, they are the ones who develop the programs that engages the students and are the ones that make sure at the end of the day each child is receiving the care they need. They know their students and program the best, which is why they as citizen experts are crucial to the design development of the gardens.

These meetings created a level of trust between the clients and the designers where each can turn to the other for advice and to push the other in a helpful direction to benefit the overall project. Without these close, one-on-one meetings, we as designers would not know about the inner workings of the organization that we are designing for and would only get a surface level knowledge to base our design off of. Through these meetings, designers can get a better understanding to how we can use our design skills to best benefit the client and users.

Personally, these meetings with Ms. Armstrong, Ms. Holly, and Ms. Armstead show how engaged clients can be in a design project. They were excited and engaged with the planning and development of even the smallest elements that may benefit the site. The clients also acted as main liaisons to the Whitely community, reaching out to community members and confirming meeting locations for our charrettes. They were also the most engaged with the design overall, participating in our community charrettes and allowing us to work with the students to get their ideas as well.

As the semester continued, more of our correspondences went through email or text message to collaborate with the second charette and to confirm activities for the students.

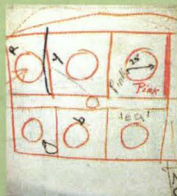
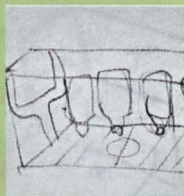


# MARCH FIRST THURSDAY UPDATE

## WE THINK IT | WE MAKE IT

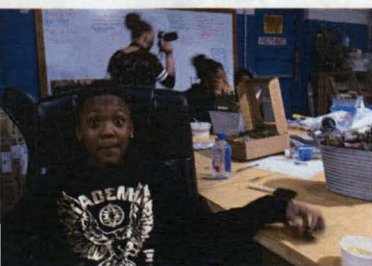
Throughout February, the club focused on designing small projects for the MOMs courtyard and side gardens. The group split up into two groups, one looking bird houses and feeders while the other explored fairy houses. Each started by picking out a location in the gardens that they wanted to place their project in and how to design for the site. They also worked out of their sketchbooks, drawing out their ideas from different inspirations. In later sessions, the bird house group worked on mock-up models of their houses while the fairy garden group explored materiality and constructability by diving right into the final product. Projects were work on through March's First Thursday in MADJAXs and showcased during the event.

I worked with two projects, the Football Field Feeder and the Bird Apartments. In each project, I helped facilitate the student's ideas and encourage them to explore through sketching and modeling their projects. Any technical skills fell into my role, including creating technical drawings, laser cutting templates, and handling tools for assembly. The students had control over the design from concept to color choices.









MOTIVATE OUR MINDS™

# COMMUNITY CHARETTE ON THE GARDENS

**What** | Community Charette on Gardens

**When** | Monday March 12 at 7:00 pm  
after Whitely Neighborhood  
Association Meeting

**Where** | Muncie Area Career Center  
2500 N. Elgin St., Muncie, IN 47306

Please join us immediately after the Whitely Community Council Meeting for a Community Participation Charette to help facilitate ideas and designs for the Motivate Our Minds Community Gardens.

Continuing the Motivate Our Minds (MOM) tradition of learning through gardening, MOM is transitioning to a new garden space on Highland Avenue, adjacent to Shaffer Chapel on the corner of Highland Ave and Brady St. We hope this garden will be a space for community and connection.

Coffee and Desert Provided



AEG Academic  
Excellence  
Grant



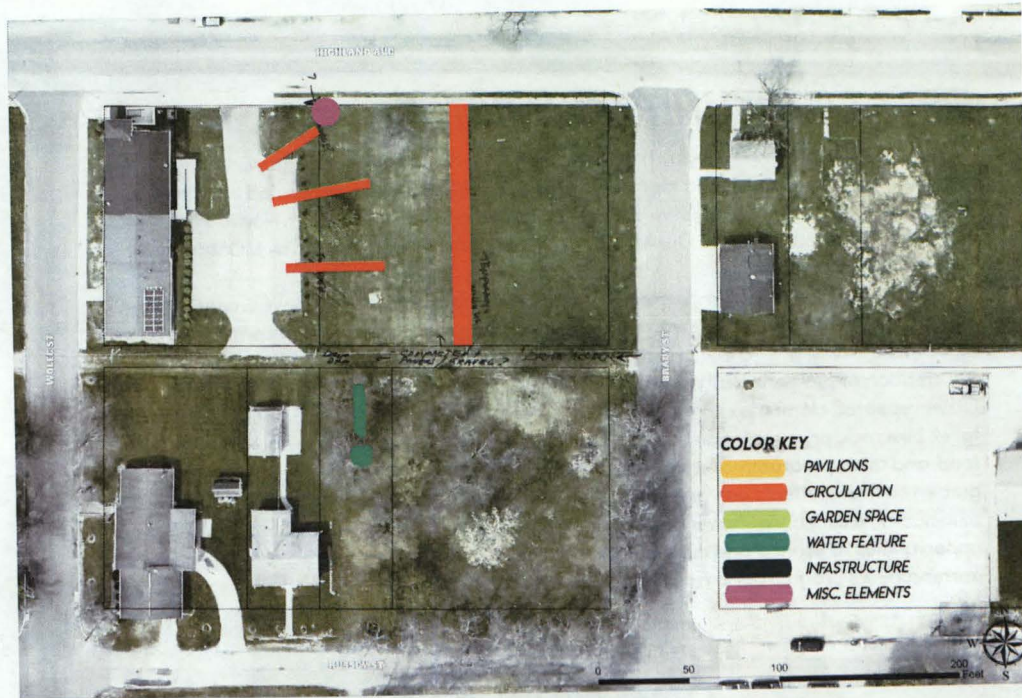


## FIRST COMMUNITY CHARETTE

During the first community charrette for the Motivate Our Minds Garden, participants split up into four groups and focused on ideas that they wanted to see be incorporated into the new garden site. There was an overview of the project and charrette from Pam Harwood, as well as presentations about Motivate Our Minds and the history of their gardens by MOMs Faculty.

Many of the groups placed importance on moving the current butterfly pavilion and other infrastructure from the old site into the new site so that these pieces could continue to be used by Motivate Our Minds. Other important features expressed by all if not most groups included the creation of pavilions, paths, and entry to the gardens, seating areas, and visual barriers. Other repeated elements expressed from the first workshop include the composting station and toilet, bike rack, art installations, signage, beehives, reading or literary spaces, flowers, growing food, and more programmatic spaces. Many expressed interest in focusing on a growing garden so that students can grow and sell crops from the garden while looked at the possibility of including a sensory or flower garden. With these ideas, many of them point at looking for opportunities to expand and cultivate the current MOMs programs, particularly the garden club, entrepreneurs program, and future summer programs.







## GROUP 1 | SHARING AND INFRASTRUCTURE OPPORTUNITIES

This group focused on the programmatic and infrastructure spaces within the site. They placed importance on spaces that supplemented the growth of the garden spaces and the growth of the students throughout the interactions with the gardens. Water and seating were also placed as key features for the site.

- Beehive area with the spaces to have tours in order to learn about the community and markings or trail to mark the bees' flight path
- Rain gardens as holding areas for water with the potential for an educational idea. Opportunity to allow for rain gardens to irrigate other areas
- Water feature
- Healthy place to eat in the garden
- Grazing gardens: an idea where you can wander through the gardens with eating in mind. Herbs throughout, other edible plants, strawberries, melons, etc. with signage to look at what you are eating. Potential for QR code use to look up and read more information about the plants
- Consider all forms of access to the gardens, bike and trike ridings, not only to the garden but through the garden. Includes walking trails and ADA accessibility
- Create permanent installations in the wooden area, could be artistic and informational, could be nature-based play settings
- Consider carefully the alley with its easements. Will need to allow for trucks through here, gravel and pavers to see this as a traffic path that is kept clear
- Consider how the area to the east of the wooded area, owned by the church, could be shared and jointly used without permanent structure
- Shaffer Chapel parking area and entrance to the garden from here, be respectful and address the historic and cultural significance of the chapel.



## GROUP 2 | EXPERIENCES

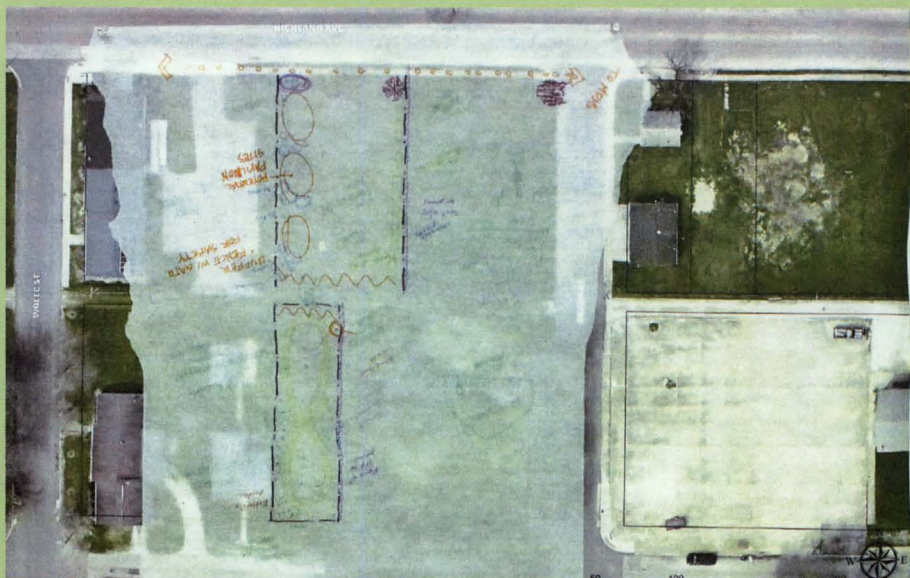
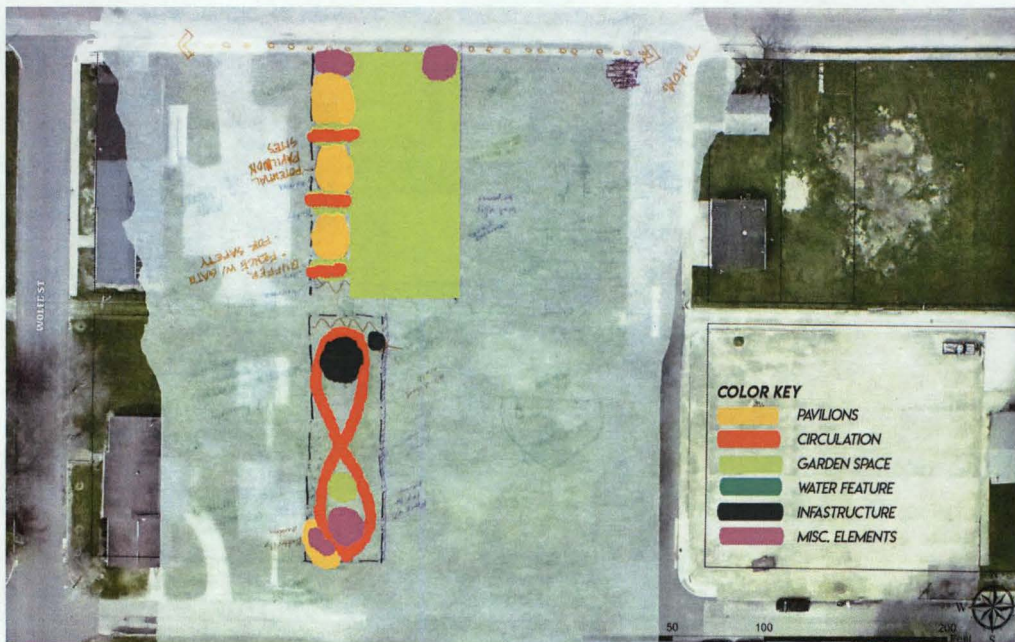
This group looked at programming, experiences, and aesthetics of the new garden site. This idea that the garden and its users must teach others to respect the garden is important and can be seen again in the importance placed on hosting different learning opportunities. They also brought up the importance of color throughout the garden spaces and the use of signage to help with the organization and circulation of the site.

- Reading benches to promote reading in the garden
- Garden beds that pertain to story books that promote literacy
- Pads of colorful flowers and trees along pathways and portal entries as a welcome to the garden
- Interactive activities for children in the garden, beehives, etc
- Multi-directional signs on perimeter of garden so that the signage and not a fence creates the boundary edge
- Grow and preserve vegetables with canning courses and learning how to preserve
- Respect the property of the community
- Create welcoming pathways into the garden
- Pavilion proposed in the South lot so that the current trees can provide additional shade
- Event or seasonal gardens like a pumpkin patch or even Christmas tree field could be planted
- A grape arbor trellis on the sides of the gardens shed might make a beautiful passageway
- A-Z Alphabet garden
- Welcome to our Garden" sign











## GROUP 3 | GROWTH THROUGH ACTIVITIES

This group was more focused on activity spaces for the community and for the students. They placed importance on spaces that engage the students with different programs and processes of the gardens. They also held visual barriers in high importance, looking at the use of vegetation, artwork, or fences to help mark the garden.

- The skinny wooded lot to the South can become similar to Narnia, a get-away, a magical place shaded in the trees
- A "yellow brick road" through this area lined with smaller scale demonstration gardens in the pockets of sun might allow all to gain the skills needed to nurture and tend to the planted areas in the North with the sun.
- A long-term vision might be to create nut and fruit trees in an orchard
- Permaculture processes could allow one to learn about the growth cycle of food
- A buffer to the alley could be designed and an opening to the East on the Southern site would allow an invitation to the church to use the gardens
- A pavilion in the Northern sunny lots would help with higher production garden farms with a higher yield
- Consider micro-farms on productive land too
- Create an entry feature on Highland
- Create ADA accessible beds and different types/heights of planting beds
- Bike Rack
- Seating
- Fence with gate for safety or wall with ivy for privacy, but still see through
- Butterfly Pavilion/garden on the Northside of the site and the old composting toilet near the alley/center of the site.
- Craft demonstration garden
- Art installation



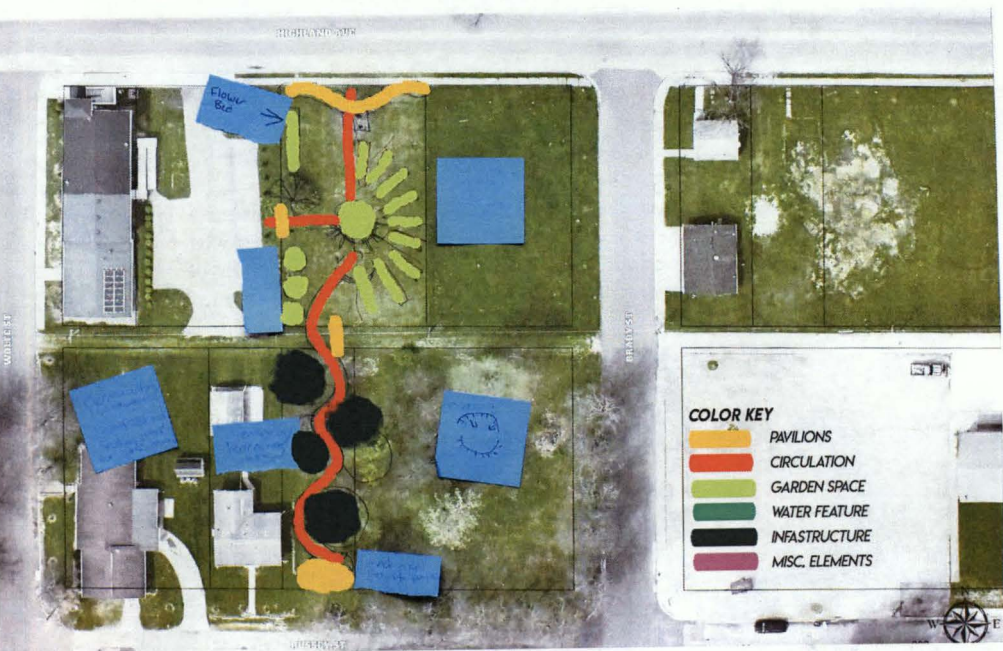
## GROUP 4 | RADIAL FOCUS

This group focused primarily on an entrance pavilion and a main focal point for the Northern part of the garden. A key design idea was the radial arrangement of the garden pots with a wavy path leading towards the rest of the site. They also specifically placed importance on the return of the butterfly pavilion from the old garden site and expressed high interest in having a plant focused garden with flowers, fruit trees, and pumpkins. Finally, circulation and entry into the site was also emphasized in their design ideas, in which they looked at how to draw users into the site from Shaffer Chapel and Highland Ave.

- Create two welcoming entrances, one on Highland leading to the heart of the gardens and one from the Shaffer Chapel parking area
- Let the paths, portals, and beauty of a perennial garden draw people to the garden center
- Create a focal point at this center, possibly a water feature, or a pavilion with radically aligned garden plots working outward from this point
- Let the teaching classroom be here at the heart of the garden with natural garden learning in the radiating paths
- Place a destination at each path end, like a pumpkin patch, watermelon patch, sunflower field, or strawberry field. Something that draws children through the productive, edible garden plots to fields that have seasonal fruits and flowers
- Create a "100 Acre Woods" setting in the South Wooded site with artistic installations, a tree house pavilion, and nature play activity areas like a fort building area or sand pit
- Consider the alley that separates the two garden settings and look at ways to connect the two, maybe an arch over the alley, maybe a lighted path into the woods
- A pavilion on the South side of the site, like "Pooh's house" that can be interactive and full of learning activities
- Make a fairy garden path here with trees and smaller scale underbrush planted
- Let the transition from the "100-Acre Woods" to the North as an orchard
- Butterfly pavilion near the entrances on Highland and Shaffer Chapel
- Include permaculture, composting, and seating areas
- Sensory-learning areas







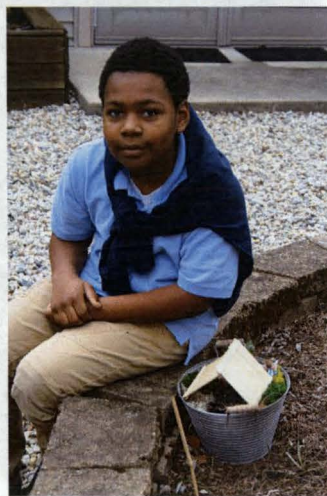
## APRIL FIRST THURSDAY UPDATE

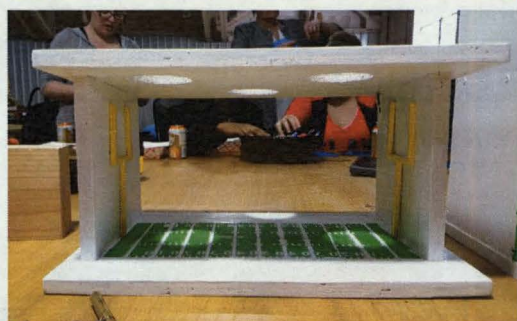
### *WE THINK IT / WE MAKE IT*

Over the course of March, the student finished up their bird houses and began to install their projects into the gardens. They also began their introductory exploration in entrepreneurial crafts through wind chimes and sun catchers. We also hosted a workshop for them during April's First Thursday event where many finished their projects and were able to showcase their work from the past two months.

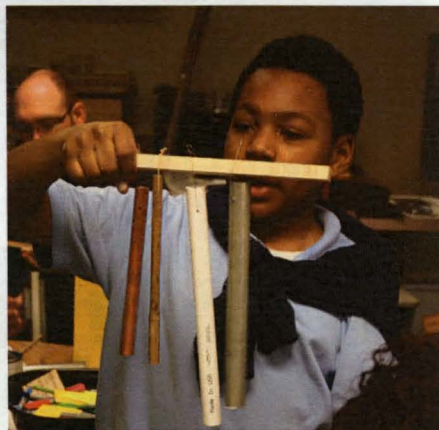












MOTIVATE OUR MINDS'

# COMMUNITY CHARETTE ON THE GARDENS

**What** | 2nd Community Charette on Gardens  
**When** | Thursday, April 12 at 5:30 pm  
**Where** | Shaffer Chapel  
1501 E Highland Ave, Muncie, IN 47303

Please join us for our second Motivate Our Minds Community Participation Charette! We will continue facilitating ideas and designs for the Motivate Our Minds Community Gardens.

Continuing the Motivate Our Minds (MOM) tradition of learning through gardening, MOM is transitioning to a new garden space on Highland Avenue, adjacent to Shaffer Chapel on the corner of Highland Ave and Brady St. We hope this garden will be a space for community and connection.

Food and Refreshments Provided



CAP MAKES | MUNCIE MAKES

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# SECOND COMMUNITY CHARETTE

For our second charette, we took a different approach in engaging the community. The charette was hosted in Shaffer Chapel, a historical landmark in the community and the adjacent site to the new garden. This allowed for the participant to experience the site and understand the space that we are design for before attacking the map with ideas. We also gave each group a kit of parts, featuring clay, fake plants, tiles, paper pieces, glue, scissors, and wood pieces so that they can build up their ideas directly on the map. This allowed participants to become more interactive with the charette and allowed them to begin to visualize their ideas in forms other than just words. At first, it took a while and an introduction into the supplies in front of them for the participants to begin, but once they understand the different ways that they can showcase their ideas, collaboration began to flow. These groups focused less on overall circulation and more on gardens and programmatic spaces. Many of them have visual barriers of flowers and vegetation along the edges of the site. These groups also included more water features and more garden plots for the students and community to utilize. The charette also took more time and many participants stayed past the typical end time for the charette, showing their engagement with the design process and with the project.







## GROUP 1 | SPECIALIZED GARDENS

This group focused on the inclusion of several different specialized gardens for the site. They include an experimental garden for younger students, a rain garden, and a herb garden just to name a few. This group also contained a faculty member of MOMs who works with the elementary students in their garden club. Many of the trees and garden plots were labeled with specific plants to be placed in the new garden. The herb spiral from the first charette also returned. The group also prioritized circulation and accessibility for the site with the inclusion of the ramp and long pathways.

- Spiral Path at entry
- Pollinator Garden
- Strawberries!
- Reading Benches
- Fire Pit
- Fountain (near fire pit)
- Pavilion near Shaffer Chapel edge
- Cistern for water collection
- Herb Spiral
- Mosaic Tile Wall
- Specialty Garden
- Ramp entry into the garden and ada access
- Rain Garden
- Perennial flowers
- Experimental Garden for young kids
- Compositing Toilets
- Mad Kitchen



## GROUP 2 | GARDENING FOCUS

Of all the groups, this group focused the heaviest of the centralized garden. They held the main community garden in importance, with circulation spiraling to it and utilizing a large pavilion in the center. They also specified the idea of separating the garden plots of the students and the community so that they can be programmed differently. Their design also incorporates a series of pavilions for different programmatic purposes.

- History of Trees
- Large pavilion in the center of garden plots
- Separation of children's and community garden plots
- Strawberries, melons, and pumpkins plots
- Butterfly pavilion to the South of the garden plots
- Treehouse pavilion in the South site
- Maple trees
- Bee Hive
- Neighbor parking on the South edge
- Spiral circulation between gardens, woods, and parking
- Flower and vegetation edge on Highland











## GROUP 3 | NATURAL CONNECTIONS

Throughout the charrette, this group focused on the different connections and divisions found throughout the site. They focused on creating circulation through the Southern site and looked at a balance between gardening and water collection on the Northern site. They also placed high importance on creating boundaries with vegetation and a trellis so the garden is separated and safe of the main road.

- Garden plots on Shaffer Chapel edge fill with vegetables, herbs, spices, and fruits
- Extra parking from Shaffer lot near alleyway
- Flowerbed edge on Highland
- Large water feature
- Rain gardens
- Trellis with butterfly houses to show plot line
- Butterfly Pavilion
- Benches along paths
- Signage into the garden
- Inclusion of several colorful plants and flowers along paths
- Large center pavilion with seating
- Welcome signage to the garden



## GROUP 4 | OPPORTUNITIES BASED ON EXPERIENCE

What's interesting about this group is that the participants are MOMs high school volunteers who have gone through the program and have firsthand experiences with the old garden. They create an interesting perspective, they can see the gardens the way that a kid sees it and what would be fun and interesting to them, but they can also see the pros and cons of different ideas based on the typical actions of students. As I talked with this group, they brought up concerns that students may not appreciate or utilize a literary forest such as the first charrette suggested. They proposed utilizing the infrastructure from the old site and introducing new amenities such as speakers and a charging station for students.

- Entry pavilion or gateway
- The use of a gazebo on the North edge of the site
- Wavy path circulation
- Garden plots line along the North site
- Composting toilet
- Butterfly Pavilion near alley edge
- Natural pond on the South site
- Bird baths
- Bee Hive
- More Gardening beds
- Leave off the amount of mud and lessen the use of literary devices for the gardens
- Speakers for music
- Charging Station that is solar powered
- Places to allow kids to run
- Clear pathways
- Spaces that allow for more entrepreneurial opportunities







# MOMS STUDENT CHARETTE

During two of the weeks, we took the students on a site visit of both the past and future garden sites and engaged them in the different charrettes. What was interesting about the student charette compared to the community charette was the shift in focus. Though gardening was attempted to be kept within their plans, they focused their attention on more social spaces, whether that being benches near water features or introducing playground features. One element that they always kept was the importance of growing strawberries in their garden, because Motivate Our Mind's strawberries are "fire".

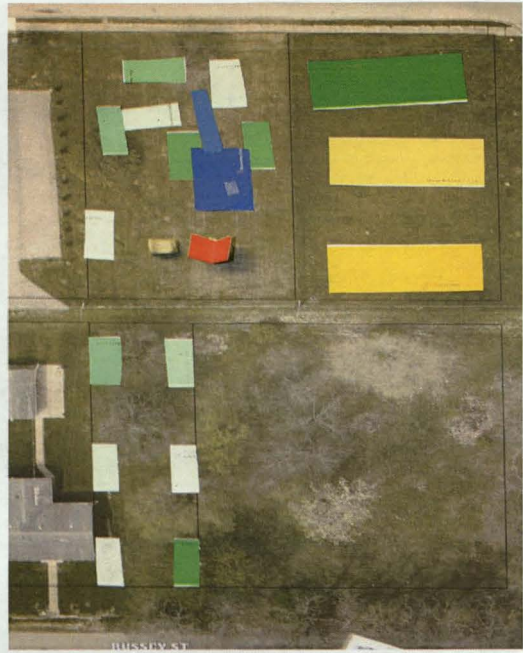
The first day of charette was a more tradition charette using slips of paper to denote different ideas while the second day of charette utilized the same kit of parts as the second community charette. The days also focused on different ideas. Day one looked more on the organization of garden plots. Day two focused more on the different programmatic areas found within the site.

## GROUP 1 | DAY 1 GARDENS

The group this day focused on the arrangement of the proposed garden plots. The looked at a potential pinwheel arrangement, focusing on a centralized water feature and pavilion to supplement their garden.







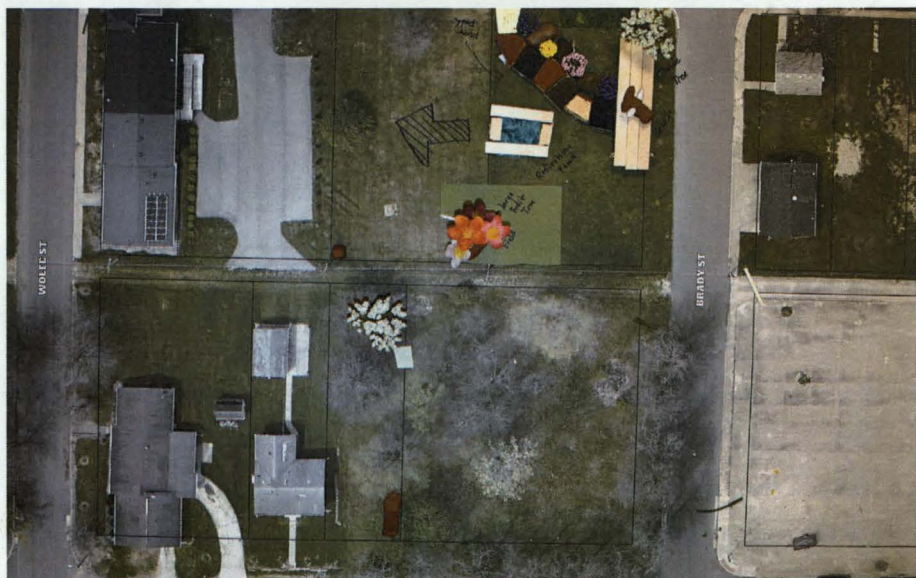
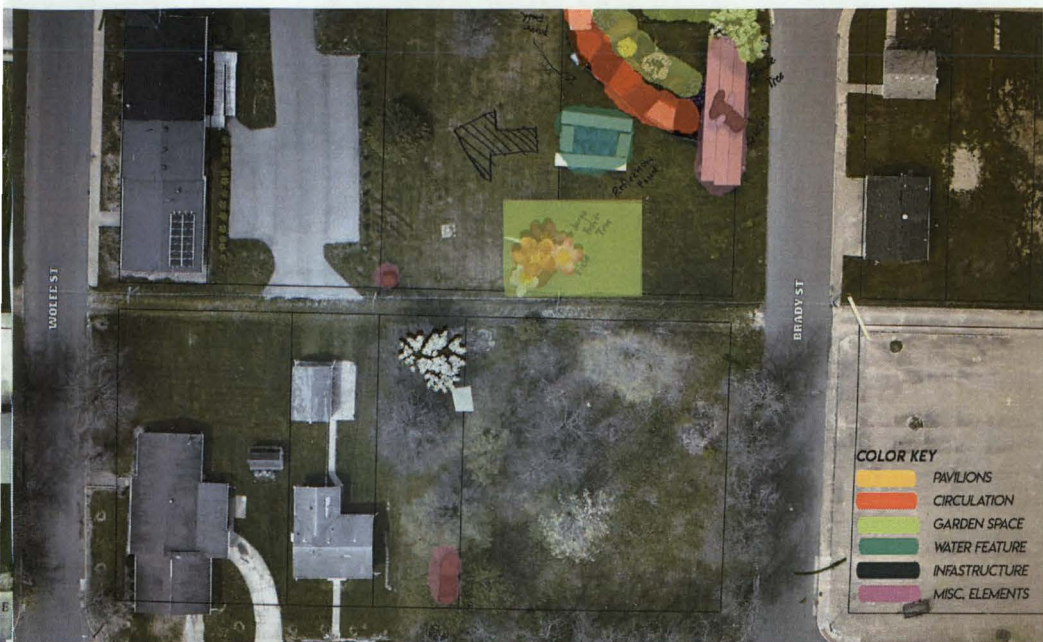
## GROUP 1 | DAY 1 GARDENS

This group looked at a singular key space, a tranquil bench next to a flower path and a reflection pond. With the potential for introspective, the group was more focused with the potential social implication of the space and the potential for playground equipment on the adjacent sites.

- Peaceful Bench
- Reflection Pond
- Paver Path
- Large Fruit Tree
- Garden Field
- Grass and Flower sections
- A large tree for shade
- An amazing slide











## GROUP 2 | SOCIAL SPACES

The final group focused their attention to more active spaces. Much of their circulation, layout of garden beds, and locations of shade were based off of the inclusion and location of different playground equipment. They also included a pavilion near the center of the entire site for centralized access.

- Playground equipment such as hangin bars and swings
- Trees
- Garden Plots
- Large Pavilion towards center of garden
- Potential art installation



## IDEA COMPILATION

When compiling all of the ideas and data from the charette groups, one can start to see patterns. Overall, the community held the idea of a strong community garden in the forefront. Circulation and the use of pavilions can also be seen as important features in the site.

The next few pages consists of simple color diagrams of the groups proposed ideas and gardens. By taking the similarities in these diagrams as well as the written analysis of each board, a main, simplified idea can begin to take hold and begin to be developed, bring in not only the ideas held by most but also looking at smaller elements from a few groups which will increase the usability of the site.

From the compiled diagram of all eleven charette groups, one can see a higher focus of gardening on the Northern part of the site. The Southern part of the site focuses more on specialized spaces, utilizing pavilions and pathways to create spaces for the users to engage with. It can also be noted the importance of the garden center as a node for circulation and activity with the gardens, while more infrastructure related spaces are found along the alley, more on the South site. The gardens also spill out into the adjacent sites, which creates potential plans in the future should Motivate Our Minds acquire those sites. The circulation tends to weave its way through both sites, with a simple path on the North and a more weaving path on the South. Signage for the site focuses more on the entrances off of Highland and Shaffer Chapel. The potential bee hive is also securely located in the lower Southwest corner of the site. According to this diagram, a potential water feature can most likely be found on either side of the alleyway, close to the Eastern boarder of the site.



	C1 G1	C1 G2	C1 G3	C1 G4	C2 G1	C2 G2	C2 G3	C2 G4	C3 G1	C3 G2	C3 G3	Total
	P22	P24	P26	P28	P36	P38	P40	P42	P44	P46	P48	
Beehive	X	X			X	X		X				5
Rain Garden	X				X		X					3
Water Feature	X			X	X		X	X	X	X		7
Areas to Eat (within garden)	X											1
Grazing Garden	X											1
Good Circulation/Pathways	X	X		X	X					X		5
ADA Accessible	X		X		X			X				4
Nature Based Play	X											1
Art Installations	X		X		X						X	4
Alley Consideration	X		X	X								3
Entrance from Highland Ave	X		X	X								3
Entrance from Shaffer Chapel	X		X	X								3
Reading Benches		X										1
Literary Areas/Forest		X	X	X								3
Signage (Directory)	X											1
Signage (Entry)		X					X	X				3
Signage (Informational for Garden/ Program)						X	X					2
Ability to Can/Preserve Food		X										1
Pavilions (North)			X	X		X	X	X	X			6
Pavilions (South)		X									X	3
Event/Seasonal Garden		X		X		X						3
Arbor Trellis		X										1
Alphabet Garden		X					X					2
Garden Beds				X			X	X	X	X	X	6
Fruit/Nut Tree Orchard			X	X		X				X		4
Micro-farm			X									1
Seating	X		X	X			X			X		5
Visual Barrier near edges			X			X	X					3
Butterfly Pavilion			X	X			X	X	X			5
Composting Toilet			X	X	X			X				4
Specialized Learning Pavilion			X		X			X				3
Bike Rack			X									1
Garden Focal Point				X								1
Fairy Garden				X								1
Permaculture				X								1
Sensory Learning Area/Garden				X								1
Spiral Path					X	X		X				3
Pollinator Garden					X							1
Emphasis on Strawberries					X							1
Fire Pit					X							1
Cistern					X							1
Herb Spiral					X							1
Mosaic Tile Wall					X							1
Specialty Garden					X							1
Perennial Flowers					X							1
Experimental Garden					X							1
Separation of Student and Community Plots						X						1
Parking on Site						X						1
Colorful Flowers and Plants		X					X					2
Speakers for Music								X				1
Charging Station								X				1
Open spaces								X				1
Playground Equipment										X	X	2



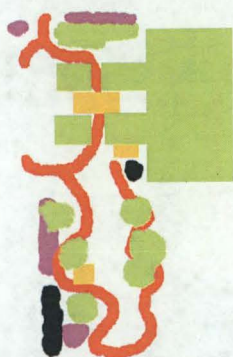


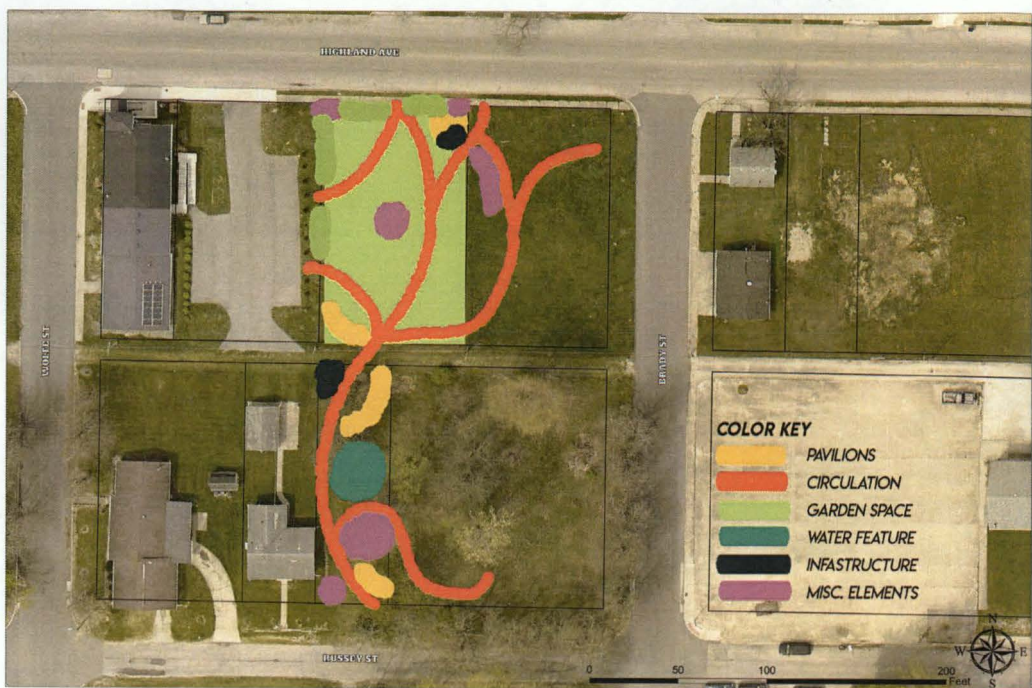
BRADY ST













# PROPOSED GARDEN PLAN

For the design of the proposed gardens, I attempted to keep in mind everyone's ideas from the charrettes, as well as the ideas that I encountered in my meetings with the main clients and with the students. The circulation weaves through the site, creating connections to Highland, Shaffer Chapel, and Russey St. This circulation allow for users to travel through the site and experience the different programmatic spaces found throughout

The Northern part of the site host the main garden space, with a centralized element creating the focal point of the space. Pavilions are found on the Northeast and Southwest corners of the North half, with the Northern most one containing equipment needed for the gardens and the Southern most one representing the inclusion of the Butterfly Pavilion from the old site. The street is also met with a long flower bed to create a visual barrier from the curve. A bike rack is represented by the Northwest purple spot while signage for the entry of the gardens is represented by the other purple spot.

The Southern part of the site features more specialized spaces. The bee hive is found in the lower Southwest corner. Another specialized feature is also given importance here, with the potential to become either the literary woods discussed in the first charette or a specialized art installation discussed in the second charette. The water feature is also located here, creating a tranquil space for the users to relax and recollect their thoughts. Infrastructure of the site, particularly the composting toilet is found near the alleyway of the site, which will allow for easy access from both sites of the site. Finally the collection of pavilions allow for specialized program to occur with one looking at an outdoor workshop.



HIGHLAND AVE

WOLFE ST

RUSSEY ST





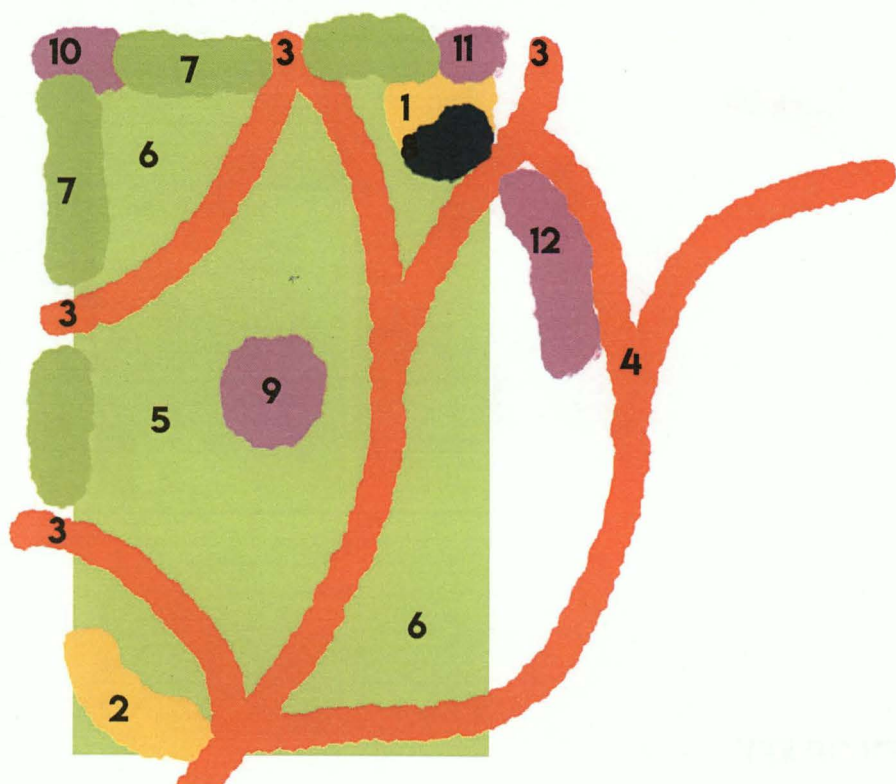






## COLOR KEY

	PAVILIONS
	CIRCULATION
	GARDEN SPACE
	WATER FEATURE
	INFASTRUCTURE
	MISC. ELEMENTS



### COLOR KEY

	PAVILIONS
	CIRCULATION
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	MISC. ELEMENTS



## **NORTH SITE**

### **PAVILIONS**

1. Large Entry Pavilion near Highland
2. Butterfly Pavilion from old gardens on Shaffer Chapel and Alley corner

### **CIRCULATION**

3. Entrances from Highland Ave and Shaffer Chapel
4. Potential Path through site on the East

### **GARDEN SPACES**

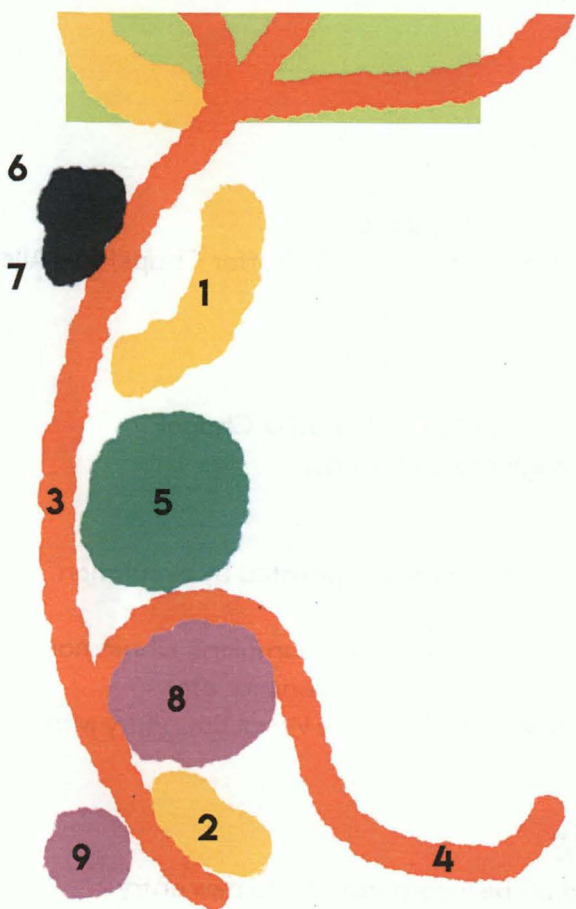
5. Main garden plots in center area, separated by circulation paths
6. Specialized gardens, either seasonal (pumpkins, Christmas trees) and/or learning (alphabetical, sensory, etc)
7. Large bushes or flower beds to create visual boundary with street

### **INFRASTRUCTURE**

8. Main garden shed will be incorporated into new entry pavilion

### **NEW ELEMENTS**

9. A large Herb Spiral will be the focal point of the garden with the main garden plots surrounding the spiral
10. Bike Rack
11. Large Entry Signage
12. Art Installation



### COLOR KEY

	PAVILIONS
	CIRCULATION
	GARDEN SPACE
	WATER FEATURE
	INFASTRUCTURE
	MISC. ELEMENTS



## **SOUTH SITE**

### **PAVILIONS**

1. Outdoor Workshop
2. Specialized Pavilion

### **CIRCULATION**

3. Long circulation through site
4. Path into adjacent site for easy access to street

### **GARDEN SPACES**

5. Pond Area with potential for moving water into other parts of the site

### **INFRASTRUCTURE**

6. Composting Toilet near Alley/Center of the two sites
7. Shed for programmatic materials of South Site and Butterfly Pavilion

### **NEW ELEMENTS**

8. Literary Woods or Art Installations
9. Bee Hive with flight paths marked



## MAY FIRST THURSDAY UPDATE

### *WE THINK IT / WE MAKE IT*

Due to the sheer amount of work and activities everyone had during April, the club focused on finishing all previous projects for a few of the weeks. The final meeting with the student was on May 3, where we stayed at MOMs and constructed concrete pavers for their new garden. The students got to be involved with the mixing of concrete, were able to pour out their own pavers, and decorate them with their handprint, initials, tiles, and stones. When the concrete settles and cures, they will be able to use them to decorate their new garden. We decided to go this route for their final big project because of ideas that were presented in the charrettes and an idea presented during one of the projects.

In the charrettes, a few ideas circled around the use of pavers for circulation while other ideas looked at ways to decorate the garden. Out of all the possibilities for a small design build to do with the students this idea pointed us in the direction of the pavers. One of the bird feeders incorporated handprints of the painters, showing ownership of the feeder and expressing their individuality and creativity with the choice. By leaving their mark, the painters left their mark on their project and on the garden. Combining these ideas, we decided to construct concrete pavers with the students. The CAP team prepped the supplies needed and through the processes of mixing, pouring, and decorating, the project engaged the students with different aspects of the design process.









## FINAL THOUGHTS

For my honor's thesis, I wanted to explore the relationship between the designer and client through a design build project for and with a community partner. For this, my thesis advisor, Pam Harwood, was approached by Motivate Our Minds (MOMs) to facilitate two projects: helping them engage and develop a plan for their new community gardens and facilitating a club for MOMs middle school students to learn through making. As I jumped on this opportunity, my thesis evolved from a single design-build project with one client to several smaller design-build projects created in collaboration with students and a larger community dialogue about the gardens. With this shift, I feel that the project allowed me to explore the ideas and processes of Public Interest Design first hand. For my creative thesis project, I looked at the development of the MOMs Community Gardens through a series of one-on-one meetings with the MOMs leadership and charettes with the Whitely Community. Through these meetings, I was able to get an understanding about how MOMs works and what programs and ideas they held in importance when engaging their students and their community.

The development of the community garden plan can be looked at through the process of Public Interest Design. First, we have the dialogue established through the main client, the leadership and faculty at Motivate Our Minds. Though they were the one who came to us about this project and set criteria for what they wanted the gardens to accomplish, they continuously provided input about what they found helpful or harmful in the past with their experience. The meetings created a dialogue with the users so that we as designers can approach them with questions about how they engaged the built environment and so that they as the users can engage us with what they find important about design. It also created a understanding about this shift in the design process, allowing for more collaboration within the design. This process looked to learn the stories of the users, what they wanted, what they were concerned about, and what they are interested in for the design, while empowering the participant to input their own ideas with the help of their peers. The charrette created interest in the project, drawing around 12-16 participants for each session and striking the interest of the community through the engagement with the Whitely Community Council. This process started to look at how to benefit the design of the gardens through cultivating knowledge and experience of the collective citizen experts and expert citizens.

The parallel project of We Think It | We Make It took a different approach to the Public Interest Design process. Each month was a new exercise in how we as designers can engage clients and users, as well as exploring how we as mentors can help cultivate the minds of new designers as they learn the tools and skills. Each project focused on what the students wanted to design and how we can help them achieve it. It was a different type of conversation that we had with the students when compared to the community, but it still reflected the ideas of Public Interest Design since it created an open dialogue with the students, looking at their experience and pushing them to collaborate in their designs. It also opened collaboration with the students about the design of the gardens and what they want so to see as the main users of the gardens.



These sessions with the club increased the student's engagement and understanding with the design process, pushing them to think creatively in producing their ideas and exploring solutions.

As a student and as an architectural designer, I had to engage these projects from several lenses, much like the hats that were discussed by Liz Ogbu in her TED Talk. As an expert citizen, I was able to bring my architectural education to the table, whether that being through design experience, software skills, crafting abilities, or even image creation. As a student and not as a member of the MOMs community, I did not understand all of the activities and issues that MOMs and the Whitely Community experience on a daily basis, what they want in their gardens, what they find important, and even what they worry about. By engaging with the clients and users through our one-on-one meetings and charettes, I was able to gather ideas brought forward by users to begin to become the translator of ideas with the development of the overall plan. Now, as the storyteller, I am able to relay these ideas to the community through a collection of thoughts and images, hopefully increasing knowledge and excitement for the project.

For analyzing and translating the ideas from the charettes, I took two approaches. The first approach was to compile all of the ideas into a table and look at the patterns of ideas from a numerical statistic. What I found was that the groups of a single charrette may reflect each other, but may not reflect the same ideas from another community charrette. It was also evident that even though all groups knew that we are planning a community garden for the site, not all of the groups specified layouts for garden plots. Depending on the experiences of each group, of even a specific community member within a group, the present plan would go more or less in-depth with detail, showcasing even the layout of specific plants. Another set of ideas set forth was the abundance of different gardens. Typically only being discussed by a group or two's plans, there are around ten types of gardens that are proposed. Going farther, more research must be explored about each type of garden, if some of these gardens can be combined, and if these gardens will benefit the users within the site or benefit the ideas set forth by Motivate Our Minds. The second approach I took was visually overlaying a simple diagram over each presented plan and marking it up with a set color scheme. By taking the created diagrams, I was able to develop a compiled diagram with all of the proposed schemes, which allowed me to look for patterns in layout and ordering. Using these diagrams and diagram scheme, I was able to develop a simplified plan for the garden, looking at the presented ideas and similarities to find which ideas are important to the benefit of the community.

Through my thesis, I learned more about the Muncie community than the rest of my academic career. Though my discussions with MOMs, I learned about all of the resources and connections that Muncie community groups have to each other. Particularly at the first one-on-one meeting, everyone was listing off names of community members and neighborhood organizations to contact about collaboration. MOMs was also on top of these relations, quickly reaching out to organizations such as Shaffer Chapel, the Buley Center, and the Whitely

Community Council about the charettes. We also got to open up dialogue with organizations such as Big Brothers, Big Sisters and Purdue Extension during the community charettes. However, it was also seen that there are several Muncie programs that we did not have as easy connection with or potentially we did not know of their existence. I also learned how to prepare and host community charettes, which is an important feature of public interest design. Finally, I believe that I have expanded my understanding of what is Public Interest Design and increased my skill set in how I communicate these ideas and the ideas brought forth by the community so that designers can get a better understanding to design spaces.

For this project, there were some struggles in engaging and completing this project. Time was a big factor. Since I worked with a community organization and help set up community charettes to engage the community, I had to keep in mind everyone's potential schedules and my own, trying to create time to continue the dialogue of design. It was particularly hard at the end of the semester due to all of the end of the year projects that had to be completed to keep communication running. As a designer, I had to deal with letting go of control of the project. From my course work, several of my projects were individual works where I had total control over the design. For this project, since it heavily relied on the collaborative input of others, I had to step back and evaluate why each idea should be in the project and to what it benefits. It is not always what I think would be best for the space, it is what the users know from their experience to be the best or at least important to be explored in order to benefit the project.

This may be the end of my thesis and this semester's exploration into Public Interest Design, but this is not the end of the Motivate Our Minds project. The results from the charettes and the beginning of the proposed plan was presented at the MOMs annual banquet on May 16 where it was used to show the story of the gardens, the ideas present by the community, and a starting point for future development. Throughout the next few years, this project will continue and hopefully be realized into the garden that benefits Motivate Our Minds and the surrounding Whitley Community. It will take continuous support and communications from all parties participating in the design for it to evolve to spaces where it will truly benefit the community and students.

There are steps that can be taken in the next few months to continue the development of the gardens. First, there needs to be a collaboration between the Architecture and Landscape Architecture departments within CAP specifically for the community gardens project to get the expertise of landscape architecture students and faculty, since they may have more experience with designing these proposed spaces. Next is establishing a one-on-one dialogue with the MOMs faculty, particularly the ones in charge of the gardens and Garden Club. During the community charettes, these faculty members were the most in depth with the needed infrastructure for the gardens and the specific placement of garden beds, flowers, trees, and crops. They are the ones who know the gardens the most and will be the instructors for the students when they engage the site, so it is crucial that they are engaged with during the design process. Establishing relationships started during the one-on-one meetings with exterior community groups would be helpful during this time as well so that MOMs can cultivate



programs that will benefit the community and increase excitement and involvement within the project. Finally, it may be helpful to engage the MOMs summer programs, exploring what they were in the past with the old gardens, what they are currently, and determining what is missing or necessary to have in the new garden site. Having first-hand experience as a design can better help communicate ideas to the users, clients, and other designers about what needs to be there. This creative project allowed me to explore the ideas of public interest design first-hand. It takes a lot of collaboration from both the designers and from the client in order for it to succeed, however there are several routes to approaching this design philosophy. It is constantly changing and evolving. This project in itself has grown and changed since the original proposal. I believe these changes benefit the MOMs community as they expand their programming, and for myself as this project has expanded my knowledge and skills. It was a privilege to work with the community of faculty and students at Motivate Our Minds this semester and I hope that through this project and hopefully future iterations of the project that their garden will come to fruition.

